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OLC 71-1040

1 October 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: White House Concern Over Laos Debate

1. At 1615 hours this afternoon, I received a call from Mr. Tom Korologos, Special Assistant to the President, who said he understood that "a deal was cooking" between Senators Stennis and Symington to establish a ceiling on U. S. expenditures in Laos. He said this was completely unacceptable to the White House and that he, General Haig and Clark MacGregor were going over Monday morning to ask Senator Hugh Scott for help in heading this off, and that he had asked Ed Braswell, Chief Counsel, Senate Armed Services Committee, if he and the Chairman would like a briefing. Mr. Braswell said that they didn't have time for a briefing but would like briefing papers. Mr. Korologos asked that we "stamp something secret" and send it over to Mr. Braswell, even if it was the same thing we had already given him before.

2. I said we had provided a substantial quantity of material on Laos to Mr. Braswell for Senator Stennis' use, and indeed the Director, Laotian Defense Minister Sisouk and [redacted] our FE Chief, had just spent some time with Senator Stennis and his staff this morning going over the situation in detail. I said I thought it would be hard to add anything to what we had already covered, both in written backup material and in oral briefings. I explained that we fully appreciated the problem, and had emphasized as strongly as possible to Senator Stennis and his staff that any significant cuts in the present level of U.S. support to the Laos effort would have the most serious consequences. I said that only this morning Minister Sisouk and the Director had pointed out to the Senator that any cutbacks now might be disastrous.

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3. I immediately called Mr. Braswell to report the foregoing. Mr. Braswell said it was a little late for the White House to get excited now--that they should have spoken up earlier and not left it up to CIA to carry the ball for the Administration until the last minute.

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JOHN M. MAURY
Legislative Counsel

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